

REMARKS

This is in response to the Final Office Action of May 8, 2009. By this Amendment, claims 1, 2 and 19 are amended. No claim has been cancelled and thus claims 1-4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 16, 19 and 20 remain pending in the application.

Preliminarily, Applicant would like to thank Examiner Alexander for the courtesies extended in a telephone interview on June 11, 2009. An Interview Summary Record was subsequently sent on June 12, 2009. In the Interview Summary Record, the PTO agreed to vacate the §102 rejection over DE 19928412 as stated therein.

Turning to the prior art rejection, claim 1 stands rejected as anticipated by the Cherukuri et al. patent. Reconsideration is respectfully requested. Claim 1 recites, even before the present amendment, a resilient ferrule insertable into recesses within the base board and microfluidic modules to effect a fluid-tight coupling therebetween. There is no question that the Cherukuri et al. patent discloses no ferrule at all, much less a resilient ferrule to provide a fluid-tight coupling. The Examiner seemingly acknowledged this during the interview, but requested some claim amendments to further define the relationship between the ferrules, base board, modules and their respective recesses. This has now been included in claim 1 where the ferrule is recited to be projecting from a surface of either the base board or the microfluidic module in a direction toward a surface of the other component and being resilient in the region of the fluid-type connection between the ferrule and the recess of the base board and modules. This projection of the resilient ferrules is simply not shown in Cherukuri et al. As pointed out during the interview, the Cherukuri et al. reference discloses three distinct layers or plates that are stacked vertically and coupled together to form a liquid-type seal. As set forth in column 2, line 50 *et seq.*, each plate forms a cover for the adjacent plate, but there is no

projecting ferrule that interacts to form the coupling. Rather, the plates are bonded or fused to each other. The Examiner seemingly acknowledged the distinction during the interview; however, he indicated that a further search would be required.

Similar limitations have been made to independent claim 19 and this claim should now be allowable.

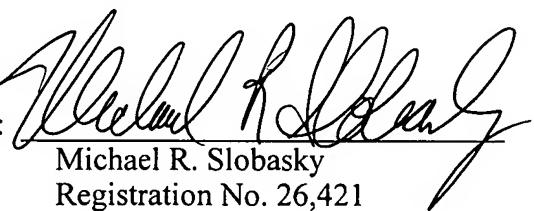
The secondary reference to Berndt also discloses no ferrules. The Benett et al. patent discloses a connector having a stiff tubing such as a HPLC peek tubing and is analogous to the HPLC fitting 12 in Fig. 1 of the present application. It is not resilient, forms no fluid-tight coupling and the other end of the tubing cannot be inserted into any recess. The fluid-tight seal results from compression of the o-ring 19.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the limitations set forth in claims 1 and 19 clearly distinguish over the prior art and this application should now be in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner is cordially invited to telephone the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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